

Chapter 6 Chiefdoms and Early States in Africa and the Americas: 600 BCE—600 CE

Agriculture and Early African Kingdoms:

Chiefdom: An agricultural village or town of up to 1000 inhabitants, in which people know each other, requiring a person of authority (an elder or the head of a large family) to keep order as a respected chief

Kingdom: A city-state or territorial state in which a ruler, claiming a divine mandate and supported by a military force, keeps order and provides for the defense against outside attacks.

Sub-Saharan Africa transitioned from a forager society to agrarian-urban society with its patterns of village, city-state, kingdom, and empire

Saharan Villages, Towns and Kingdoms:

The kingdom received its support from a sufficient, although not abundant, agricultural surplus produced with the help of annual Nile floods and irrigation

Saharan Chiefdoms and Kingdoms:

Earliest evidence of agriculture: the area of the Middle Nile around Khartoum
-raised cattle, cultivating sorghum, and shaping distinctive pottery

Sorghum: a widely cultivated cereal native to warm regions of the Old World. It is a major source of grain and of feed for livestock.

Nubia (aka Kush):

- Closely tied to Ancient Egypt
- 1850-1400 BCE—rivals with Egypt
- But was colonized again by Egypt after 1400 BCE
 - part of New Kingdom's foreign expansion
- based on farming, livestock raising, and trading gold as well as rain forest ivory and timber
- tombs in Nubia contained objects rivaling those of the Egyptians
- archers were especially sought after as mercenaries.
- 2500 Kerma (a kingdom in Nubia) grew in wealth and power
 - a. 1st city in Africa outside of Egypt
 - b. capital of Nubia
 - c. rivals with Egypt over control of the Nile trade
 - d. Egypt eventually destroyed Kerma
- Second capital: Napata
- Napatan Empire
 - a. Named after the capital city
 - b. Culturally very Egyptian
 - c. Rulers married their sisters as the pharaohs did

- d. mummification and pyramids for rulers
- e. Briefly ruled Egypt in 700s BCE (as 25th dynasty)

-Final Capital at Meroe

Meroitic Empire

- a. Meroe surrounded by woodlands, good for iron work
- b. could trade with Greeks via the Red Sea

Nubia After 900 BCE

- around 1000 BCE, Egypt weakened
- Nubia reasserted its independence
- Regained control of goldmines
- New empire from 900 BCE to 300s CE

bow and arrow=African inventions

Monarchy

- kings elected, although candidates from a small pool
- Maternal line very important
- some women even served as rulers
- customary law as interpreted by priests
- kings could be forced to commit suicide for violations
- Unsure of administration

Economy

- Agriculture and cattle mainstays
- Grew and exported cotton (even before Egypt)
- Trade with Greece, Rome, India, and Arabia
- Pottery

Pottery

Male-Made

- Turned on wheels
- For trade

Female-Made

- Handmade
- Domestic use

Two Villages of Tichitt-Oualata:

As the monsoon patterns moved eastward, foragers retreated to shallow lakes and oases

Dhar Tichitt and Dhar Oualata in Mauretania around 2000 BCE flourished until 600 BCE.

- they found: large masonry structures, corrals that held large cattle, granaries that held millet, tomb mounds, and furnaces (evidence of craftspeople)

Meroe on the Middle Nile:

1. Descendants of the 25th Nubia dynasty of Egypt
2. capital: Meroe

3. kings built large reservoirs to supply the farmers
4. the latter grew cereals of sorghum and millet, but archeological finds also include barley and wheat, all of which were planted with the plow
5. Financed itself with the agricultural surplus
6. 20,000 inhabitants
7. The King was recognized as king of Meroe but the Kingdom was decentralized (Kingdoms were ruled by their own town chiefs)

Difference in power between a king and a chief: royal control over trade.

Iron in Sub-Saharan Africa:

The people of Meroe mined, smelted, and forged iron (possibly the first to ever do that)

Meroe's Cultural Achievements:

Monuments had a distinct style

- tombs
- pyramids with flat tops
- pyramids with steep angles

Main temple was in the North

- Priests added native deities to the pantheon (ex: lion god Apedemek)

Well known to the outside world

Heliodorus of Emesa, a Hellenistic Greek writer, made it the stage for the conclusion of his popular romance novel, *Aethiopica*

The Kingdom of Aksum:

A king replaced the chiefdoms of the highlands and established the kingdom of Aksum

Based on a relatively abundant, plow driven agricultural, Aksum assumed control of the trade from Meroe

Based in the Ethiopian Highlands

Aksum became the major supplier of African goods to the Roman Empire

Meroe's Decline and Aksum's Rise:

Three factors to Meroe's decline:

1. the iron industry devoured immense amounts of charcoal
2. beginning in the late 200s BCE, camel nomads from the deserts east of the Nile raided northern Meroe
3. Ethiopia acculturated to Meroe

a combination of agricultural and commercial wealth enabled the chiefs of Aksum to assume the succession of Meroe